

Stay Alert, stay alive, stay up
By Spc. Keisha Lunsford
EUSA Public Affairs
25 April 2001

Pulling your part as a team member for at least 12 hours a day but thinking of nothing but catching up on sleep?

And dealing with the stresses of “real world” training can be hard on a soldier’s body, which is the case during this year’s Reception, Staging, Onward-movement and Integration exercise.

“Sleep deprivation can be just as dangerous as being drunk,” said Spc. Fred Osgood, medical specialist for the 168th Medical Battalion at the Camp Walker Urgent Care Clinic. He said the difference is that when a person is drinking, they are usually in a relaxed environment so their reflexes slow down at a much faster pace than a person who’s been up for at least 12 hours everyday.

But the reflexes of a person who has been working slows down over a longer period of time so they’re more dangerous.

Osgood offers helpful advice for everybody participating in the RSO&I exercise.

For now, he said you won’t get used to working 12-hour shifts in one week, but you can in one month.

“Just keep your mind busy,” said Osgood. RSO&I participants should find a hobby or do something that helps to wind down such as reading or watching TV so you can enjoy a more peaceful sleep.

Napping is good during the day, but any nap more than 20 minutes is not good because it’ll make you feel more exhausted than refreshed.

Also, keeping up with personal hygiene is a must. “If you’re cleaner, you’ll feel better,” he said. And, everyone should pay more attention to detail because it helps occupy their mind and keep them alert.

Watching what you eat and drink is also vital to staying up for the long shifts and the success of the mission. Since junk foods and sodas make a person tired quicker, everyone should replenish their bodies with healthier meals, lots of juices and water.

And, worrying doesn’t help induce good sleep or maintain combat readiness, he said.

So, staying calm, eating healthy and relaxing when possible are essential to individual health as well as mission success during RSO&I.